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CARE OF
VENETIAN BLINDS

ELAINE KNOWLES WEAVER and GLADYS DEVAULT CASE

OHIO AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT
STATION - - WOOSTER, OHIO

CONCLUSIONS

The limitations of this study are recognized but certain conclusions will be made on the basis of the findings and experiences.

Women who have Venetian blinds believe they offer controlled light, ventilation, privacy, insulation against both heat and cold and protection for draw draperies against sun deterioration.

There is a direct relationship between preference for Venetian blinds and the frequency with which they are dusted. Those women who dust their blinds regularly once or twice a month do not consider them difficult to clean or keep clean.

Women who accept Venetian blinds as furnishings that require dusting as do other furnishings dust them more frequently.

A V-shaped vacuum cleaner attachment with Dynel rolls is a desirable device for regular dusting of Venetian blinds. The pressure of the rolls aids in removing film that ordinary round brush attachments do not remove.

Good grade waxes and polishes will not yellow or affect the finish on white slat materials.

When certain wax or anti-static preparations are applied to blind slats, dust and soil are more easily removed in regular dusting and cleaning.

A major cleaning of blinds can be more easily accomplished when blinds are left hanging at the windows than when removed. The exception might be when cotton tapes have become extremely soiled.

Woven plastic tapes offer an advantage in that they are easily cleaned.

Alkaline cleaners, such as ammonia, should be avoided when washing slats as they may tend to affect the finish. Such cleaners should not be necessary to remove the type of soil ordinarily found on home blinds.

Venetian blinds should seldom, if ever, be dunked in bathtubs of water or sprayed with hose.

CARE OF VENETIAN BLINDS

ELAINE KNOWLES WEAVER and GLADYS DEVAULT CASE

"Why do women often complain about the cleaning of Venetian blinds?" "Is it really such a difficult job and is it affecting our home sales?" These were questions the manufacturers and dealers of Venetion blinds were asking. They were convinced that, in spite of style trends for other types of window treatments, only Venetian blinds offered the advantages of privacy with controlled light and ventilation. Upon request of the Venetian Blind Institute, the Department of Home Economics undertook to find out how women were cleaning their blinds and whether or not easier ways might be developed.

Three different methods were used to get the answers: (1) A survey of Venetian blind users to find out practices; (2) Laboratory testing of materials, tools and methods; and (3) Experimental work with 12 women, who were using these blinds for the first time, in the use of different tools and methods for cleaning.

PART 1. Practices and Opinions of Venetian Blind Users

Practices, problems and opinions of homemakers are considered necessary to give direction to any study of household tasks. For this reason a questionnaire was sent to 500 users whose names were provided by seven Columbus, Ohio manufacturers and dealers. Twenty percent, or 100 users, completed and returned the survey form. Statistically this proved to be an adequate sample.

In brief, the respondents gave the following information:[1]

49 were city dwellers, 45 were suburbanites and 6 lived in rural areas. There was an average of 8.9 Venetian blinds in the homes.

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[1]Details of the survey are given in an unpublished Master's Degree thesis, "Practices and Opinions in the Use and Care of Venetian Blinds As Indicated by 100 Franklin County, Ohio Homemakers, 1959" by Gladys Devault Case, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Supported in part by a grant-in-aid from the Venetian Blind Institute.

58 of the homes had aluminum blinds only; 15, steel; and, 1, wood. 26 had blinds with two or more types of slats.

50 reported having blinds with smooth plastic tapes; 24, woven plastic; and, 43, cotton. More than one type of tape was used on different blinds in some homes.

Dust, smoke and/or soot were problems in 71 homes. Dust was the most frequently mentioned.

How often did they clean their blinds?

38 dusted the blinds weekly; 32, once every two weeks; 3, once every three weeks; 24, once a month; and, 3 less often. 54 indicated that the bathroom and kitchen blinds needed cleaning more often than those in other rooms. "Pride" and "Vanity" were often mentioned as reasons for occasional extra dusting of living area blinds.

The frequency of dusting was not related to location of home, number of rooms, or type of slat materials.

What tools were used for dusting and regular cleaning?

33 of the women used a cloth for dusting; 29, dusting brush on their vacuum cleaner; 16 alternated between a cloth and vacuum cleaner tool; 8 used a special Venetian blind tool attached to their vacuum cleaners; 5 used a pronged cotton hand duster; 5 used a lamb's wool hand brush; and, 2 used a feather duster. Two did not respond.

How often did they do a major cleaning job on their Venetian blinds?

37 gave them a special cleaning twice yearly; 28, once yearly; 6, three times yearly; 7, four times yearly; 13 from once monthly to "never" and, 9 did not respond.

How did they do this major cleaning job?

66 women did all of the major cleaning job themselves; 13 had help from family members; 14 hired help; 5 sent them to a commercial laundry; and, 2 did not answer.

93 women reported how they did major cleaning. Of that number 38 washed and cleaned the blinds at the windows.

55 removed the blinds from the windows. 37 of them washed the blinds in the bath tub. 9 hung them over the clothes lines and used a hose. 5 laid the blinds on the floor for washing and 4 others took the blinds apart and washed each slat and the tapes separately.

67 used one of three products: Spic and Span, liquid Ivory or Dreft. Others used one or more of 24 different brand name products.

Only 4 women used special cleaning waxes or speciality products and no water for cleaning. They were among those who cleaned the blinds at the windows.

When asked if they had any "special tricks" for the care of their blinds, 34 answered "No"; 27 did not answer; several said, "There are none." or "I wish I did." and, 15 suggested procedures but none were considered new or different.

Would the women replace their present Venetian blinds with more of the same type?

70 answered "Yes." Among the reasons they gave were such as:

> "This type of blind provides privacy and yet we can have light and air."
>
> "Aids as an insulator against heat and cold."
>
> "Protects draperies and furniture from sun fading and deterioration."
>
> "Makes room more attractive."

30 women who would not replace them with more Venetian blinds gave reasons such as: considered them too difficult to clean, 19; wanted draw draperies because they were newer in style, 4; and, the remaining 7 gave no reasons.

Statistical treatment of these answers showed a significant relationship between frequency of dusting and attitude toward replacement. Homemakers who dusted more often were apt to replace their present blinds with more of the same type.

The presence of dust, smoke and/or soot was not an influencing factor in the women's attitudes toward replacement.

Did they believe Venetian blind cleaning was an exceptionally difficult job and how did they rate it with some of the other strenuous cleaning jobs?

78 women rated five tasks from most to least difficult. 34 thought oven cleaning the most difficult; 21, Venetian blinds; 17, cleaning and waxing floors; and 3 each thought cleaning windows and bathrooms the most difficult.

Within the limits of this sample it was obvious that the cleaning of Venetian blinds was considered one of the most difficult cleaning tasks in the home and it would influence about 20 percent of the women in their choice of blind replacements.

PART 2. Laboratory Study of Materials, Methods and Tools for Cleaning Venetian Blinds

The laboratory program and study with the 12 women in their homes were done simultaneously. Since some of the laboratory experiences were repeated by the women, this phase will be next reported.

Magazine articles, comments on questionnaires and conversations with women and Venetian blind suppliers indicated conflicting opinions about the suitability of different cleaning agents, application of finishes, effects of sunlight on slat and tape materials, and methods of cleaning. The laboratory activities were designed in an attempt to clarify some of the answers to these care and cleaning problems. Questions considered were:

Test 1. Will cleaning agents ordinarily used have an effect on color or luster of slats?

Equipment: A standard Gardner Scrubability Machine.

Test Materials: Samples of white slat materials of steel, aluminum and wood provided by the Venetian Blind Institute as typical of materials and finishes used in the industry.

Procedures: Seven each of the steel, aluminum and wood slats were cut into 18-inch lengths to fit the scrub machine pan. Light reflectance readings were made of each slat prior to washing. Seven of the most commonly used cleaning products reported by survey respondents were used for the washing tests. Concentrations used were those recommended on containers for walls and woodwork. A separate cellulose sponge, 1½ by 3½ inches, was used for each cleaning solution.

Separate slats for each cleaning solution were given 10 strokes with the sponge by the machine and allowed to air dry.

After 5 washings, light reflectance readings were made by means of a Photovolt Meter. The slats were then given another 5 washings and reflectance readings were again taken. To make certain that the reflectance was not affected by residual detergent solutions, all slats were washed with Calgon water, rinsed with distilled water and wiped dry with clean cheesecloth.

Results: The slat materials had an original reflectance of 81.5 for wood; 79.0 for steel; and, 81.0 for aluminum.

Following the first 5 washings no changes in the appearance of the finishes could be observed by the naked eye. However meter readings showed that the ammonia solution reduced the light reflectance of both the wood and steel finishes by about 4 percent; the aluminum finish was even less affected. No change in light reflectance could be noted when other products were used.

No appreciable changes were observed after 10 washings and rinsing. Hand polishing did not change the results.
These tests, which were far more vigorous than hand washing in the home, would indicate that if the amounts of the cleaning product and water suggested on the product label were used, there should be no change in color or luster of the finish of the slats. However, the continued use of ammonia is questionable.

Test 2. Will heat and sunlight affect the color of slats and tapes? Will waxes or other applied products cause slats to change color?

Equipment: A standard FDA-R Model Atlas Color Fade-O-Meter.

Test Materials: Samples of white slats of steel, aluminum, and wood and tapes of white and colored extruded plastic, woven plastic and cotton.

Procedures: Duplicate sets of slats were cut into 8-inch lengths to fit into Fade-O-Meter holders. Each slat was washed with a 0.2 percent solution of a mild liquid synthetic detergent, rinsed in tap water, re-rinsed in distilled water, and stood on end to air dry.

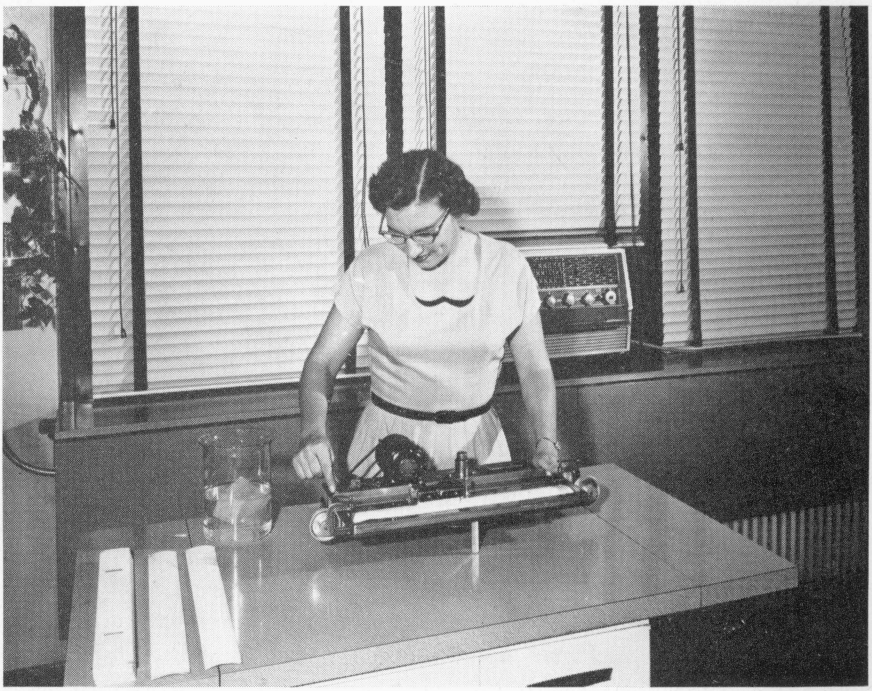

Fig. 1.—The Gardner Machine used for washing Venetian blind slats to determine the effects of cleaning agents on the finishes.

Four types of finishes were applied to the different slats: (1) an anti-static preparation to reduce static electricity which tends to attract dust; (2) a creme polish for wood and painted surfaces; (3) a cleaning and polishing wax; and (4) a wax creme. All of these products were marketed in the Ohio area.

A separate 6-inch square of cheesecloth was used for each slat. One-half teaspoon of distilled water was applied to slightly dampen the cloth and 20 drops of the product to be applied was worked into the cloth. The cloth was then stroked over the slat 10 times and the slat was allowed to air dry for 15 minutes. A Dynel buffer with a 4-pound weight was stroked over the slat 20 times and light reflectance readings were made. Black masking papers, with a section of each cut out to allow for sun exposure, were placed over the

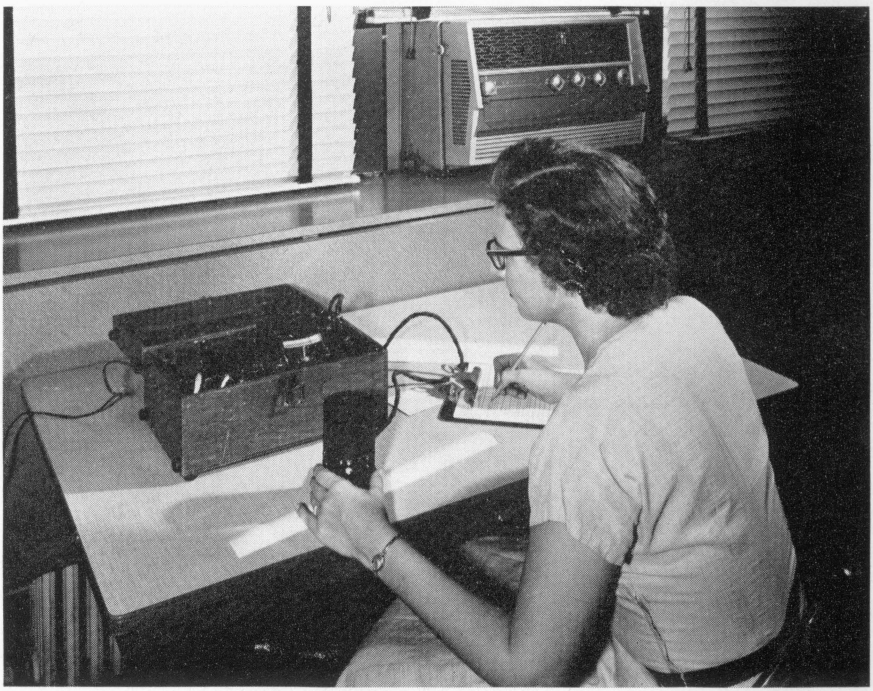

Fig. 2.—The standard Model 610 Photovolt Meter used to measure light reflectance of slat materials before and after washing.

slat samples in the holders. The holders were then placed in the Fade-O-Meter for 100 hours at 90° F., removed and light reflectance readings again made. The process was repeated for two additional 100-hour periods.

Fig. 3.—The Atlas Fade-O-Meter in which the slat and tape materials were placed in simulated sunlight at 90° F. for 100-hour periods.

Three hundred hours in the Fade O-Meter would be equivalent to 63 days of summer sunshine during the months of June, July and August This equivalent was established by the manufacturer according to conditions in Chicago, Illinois Tapes selected were cut into 8 inch lengths, left untreated, and were placed in the Fade O-Meter for 100 hours

Results. When the masks, which protected a part of the slats from exposure to the sunlight, were removed it was observed that there was no differences between the colors after either 100, 200 or 300 hours of exposure The untreated control slats retained the same degree of reflectance as did the treated exposed and unexposed sections of the metal slats Although there was no color change in the wood slats, the reflectance meter indicated a slight dulling of the finish but was hardly detectable to the eye

The belief that waxes and other applied finishes would cause white slats to yellow was not found to be true in these tests It should be remembered, however that not all of the available polishes and other treatments were used Likewise, the samples of available slat materials were also limited The advantages of the applied finishes will be explained on page 21

The effects of sunlight and heat on tape materials were more apparent than with the slats These materials were exposed for only 100 hours

The color of whiteness of some brands and types of materials were unaffected while others faded or yellowed Shrinkage of tape materials was not considered in this study

Test 3.—Are there tools, treatments or techniques that will simplify the task of cleaning Venetian blinds?

In order to evaluate methods for cleaning blinds it was necessary to have soiled blinds To artificially and yet uniformly soil slats and tapes the following procedure was used

Homemakers cooperating in the study collected and bagged house dirt from their vacuum cleaners This dirt was brought to the laboratory and sieved through very fine mesh screen and mixed into one lot in finely powdered form

An adjustable frame was built to hold blinds of different sizes. A large piece of clear plastic was sewn to form a slip-over bag. A hole, large enough to accommodate the hose end of a vacuum cleaner was cut in the side.

When a blind was to be artificially soiled, the bag was slipped over the blind and blown full of air. One tablespoon of the prepared dirt was then placed in the hose of the vacuum cleaner and blown into the bottom of the bag. Air was then blown into the bag and over the blind for one minute to distribute the dust over the blind.

Suppliers of cleaning devices designed particularly for Venetian blinds were contacted. With one exception, all generously donated their products for laboratory and home use by the jury of homemakers.

Duplicate blinds were used for cleaning; one of each type was untreated and the other was treated with the products used in Test 2.

Dusting was first done with a cloth and commercial dusting papers. Typically, it was necessary to use either item with the right hand (for the right-handed woman) and steady the blind with the left hand to keep it from hitting against the window frame. Neither the cloth nor paper protected the user's hand sufficiently to avoid the sharp edges of the metal slats which resulted in occasional scratches and cuts, both common complaints by survey respondents and cooperating homemakers.

Both the papers and cloth tended to streak the dust on the untreated slats and they would have to be "gone over" more than once. It must be remembered, however, that the amount of dust on the slats in these tests was about equal to an accumulation on blinds hanging at the laboratory windows that had not been dusted for 9 months. Dusting paper and cloth were satisfactory for dusting extruded plastic tapes but did not work satisfactorily on either cotton or plastic woven tapes. When slats had been treated with the cleaning and polishing wax or the anti-static product, the dust was less tenacious and there was less streaking with the paper or cloth. It was noted that the products gave a slick finish that allowed the paper and cloth to slide on the slats more easily; in other words, there was less "drag". Resistance was not measured; it was merely the reaction and subjective statements of the workers.

To further try the apparent advantages of these products, they were applied to certain sections of newly cleaned Venetian blinds at the laboratory windows; others were left untreated. A great deal of humidity was present in this room, and windows opened on graveled

Fig. 4.—Method used to artifically soil blinds before cleaning.

driveways which produced much dust. The blinds were inspected weekly during the spring and summer months. At the end of the six-month period those slats treated with the anti-static product had accumulated considerably less dust than the others that had been treated; however, those treated with other products all had less dust than did the slats that were merely washed and left untreated. Likewise, the cleaning of the slats was more easily done. It was also noted that when blinds were adjusted so the slats tilted slightly, they did not collect as much dust as when left horizontal.

Of the different tools used, the workers liked best the single pronged vacuum cleaner attachment with removable and washable Dynel rolls. These snug rolls slipped easily along the slats. With this tool there was also less noticeable resistance when the slats had been treated with one of the applied products.

Fig. 5.—A pronged V-shaped tool with removable and washable Dynel rolls was found to be a convenient and satisfactory device for dusting blinds.

The vacuum cleaner dusting brushes, all round and similar in design, were considered good when there was a light layer of dust; however, when the accumulation was heavy and/or of an oily nature, they were less effective.

SUGGESTED METHODS FOR CLEANING

No "magic" method for cleaning Venetian blinds could be devised. Unless some electro-static treatment or device is developed to repel or attract dust, it seems probable that human beings are going to have to provide the energy and manipulation to clean their blinds.

Various time and motion analysis techniques were used to try to simplify this task as much as possible. Theoretically, the fewer the motions, the lower the energy expenditure and time required.

If hand cleaning methods are used, the following procedure seemed to require the fewest motions and was thought by workers to be the most simple.

Fig. 6.—Dusting gloves made of four thicknesses of cheesecloth, were suitable for dusting blinds.

Make dusting gloves, with stalls for thumb and first finger, from four thicknesses of cheesecloth. (For pattern, place hand flat with fingers stretched and allow an extra inch for shrinkage.) The gloves for the experimental dusting were not treated with any product.

If the blind is of a width that can be comfortably reached by the worker:—First tilt the slats forward so that the wrists are in a natural and unstrained position. Start with the gloved hands together and the thumbs under the slat at the center of the top slat. Move the hands simultaneously in opposite directions with an even "pull" to keep the blind from rocking in either direction. When the hands have reached the end of the slat, drop them to the ends of the slat below and bring them back to the center. Move to the center of the third slat and continue the process to the bottom of the blind.

Fig. 7.—Easy rhythmical cleaning motions were started by placing hands together in the center of the blinds and moving them in opposite directions, then dropping them to the ends of the slats below and returning to the center.

If the blind is too high to comfortably reach to the top slat from the floor, stand on a steady stool centered below the blind and use the same rhythmical motions suggested above.

If the blind is too wide for the arm spread, clean one-half or side working from top to bottom and then move to the other side.

With the cheesecloth gloves it is easy to move around the tapes; with a piece of cloth there is much more manipulation in getting it readjusted on the opposite side of the tapes. With the gloves, the sharp edges of the slats go unnoticed.

Fig. 8.—Loosening the cord tension allows the slat above to move up easily when dusting.

Special cleaning with the gloves

At this point it might be said that the investigators are firmly convinced that **Venetian blinds need never be removed from the windows or be dipped in water or sprayed with a hose to be cleaned;** particularly if they are dusted with some regularity. Their convictions were confirmed when they cleaned laboratory window blinds that had been neither dusted nor cleaned for two years and had been subjected to much soot and dust.

First, tilt the slats vertically in one direction and dust with the dusting tool attached to the vacuum cleaner to remove the major amount of dust and soil; then tilt slats in opposite direction and dust. Loose tension on tilted slats allows easy manipulation of the round tool. If V-shaped tool is used, tilt slats only slightly.

Fig. 9.—Dust is best removed from woven tapes by the strong suction produced at the end of the vacuum cleaner hose.

Tapes were most easily dusted by using the strong suction through the end of the vacuum cleaner hose. This was done after the slats had been dusted.

Any oily film or soil that is not removed by dusting can be easily removed by cleaning and polishing wax in an emulsified liquid form. For this process, apply some of the wax to each of the gloves, rub them together lightly to spread the wax, then proceed as suggested for dusting—moving the hands in opposite directions from the center of the top slat to the ends; then starting at the ends of the slat below and coming back to the center.

If the gloves become too soiled, reverse them to the other hand and use the backs—they fit either hand. Better yet, have several pairs and wash them.

Plastic tapes may be cleaned with the wax as the slats are being cleaned. If cotton tapes are used, the worker may find it easier to clean both the slats and tapes with detergent water, squeezing out the gloves slightly to prevent dripping. (Detergent water drops allowed to dry on soiled slats may stain them). Tapes may be brushed with a soft brush dipped into detergent water. Use a mild liquid detergent, no rinsing should be necessary.

If slats are cleaned with wax, polish slats with clean gloves. If washed with water, apply polishing wax when slats are dry for easier dusting later.

PART 3. Observations and Experiences of 12 Homemakers in Their Use and Care of Venetian Blinds

In order to get unbiased opinions and practices in the use and care of Venetian blinds a group of 12 homemakers, never having owned or used this type of blind, were selected to participate and serve as a "jury" in this study.

One of the original objectives for the study was to try to determine if the type of fuel used in the home influenced the frequency or difficulty in cleaning. It was planned that 4 homes each would have coal, gas and oil fuels; and, that 2 of each 4 would have radiators and 2 would

have forced air circulation. To find homes with these heat qualifications, where Venetian blinds had never been used, where women were willing to participate, and within an area for easy communication proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The distribution was changed to include five homes with gas, four with coal and three with oil heating systems.

The slat and tape materials used were varied in 3 different rooms in the homes as shown in Table 1. The kitchen, bath and a living area windows were measured in the 12 homes by a Columbus Venetian blind dealer, who later installed the blinds. The blinds provided by manufacturers, who were members of the Venetian Blind Institute, became the property of the homemakers as a consideration for their participation.

The homemakers were asked to clean the blinds as often as they thought necessary and to experiment with the different tools and cleaning supplies provided for them. An investigator visited the homes every 6 to 8 weeks to discuss practices and observe the conditions of the blinds.

Results

It may be said that, in both this and the survey phase of the study, one important factor could not be measured; that of **personal standards** of the individual homemakers which obviously dictated practices in the care and cleaning of the blinds. The standards among the 12 women varied and some were higher than others.

Dusting Practices

Eight of the 12 women regularly dusted their blinds once every 2 weeks; 1, weekly; 2, once a month; and 1, less often. Four of the 8 women who dusted once every 2 weeks said that kitchen blinds needed more frequent care since moisture and oily films from cooking deposited on the slats.

The type of fuel did not seem to be a factor that influenced their practices. All three types of fuel and both radiators and forced air were represented in the homes of the women who dusted the most frequently.

The V-shaped tool with Dynel rolls attached to a vacuum cleaner was the preferred dusting tool for 7 of the 12 women. Only one preferred the round dusting tool attachment to the vacuum cleaner. Four women remained faithful to a dust cloth and did not care for mechanical devices.

TABLE 1.—Distribution of Venetian Blind Slat and Tape Materials in Houses of 12 Cooperating Homemakers

Materials		Homemakers											
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
		Rooms*											
Aluminum Slats													
Tapes:	Cotton		L									L	
	Woven Plastic	B							B	B	B		L
	Smooth Plastic			K	K	L	K	K					
Steel Slats													
Tapes:	Cotton			B	B		B	B					
	Woven Plastic		K									K	K
	Smooth Plastic	L				K			L	L	L		
Wood Slats													
Tapes:	Cotton	K				B			K	K	K		B
	Woven Plastic			L	L		L	L					
	Smooth Plastic		B									B	

*K–kitchen; B–bathroom; and L–living, dining or bedroom.

At the initiation of the study the women were asked to experiment and see if they could develop any techniques they thought made dusting or special cleaning easy. No pertinent suggestions were offered. They faithfully tried each suggestion resulting from the laboratory experiences. They agreed that tilted slats collected less dust than when kept horizontal; that by tilting the slats both the round and V-shaped tools could be used more easily and they could work with less strain on the arms.

Six of the women particularly liked the cleaning and polishing wax. The finish, they thought, gave a slicker surface and there was less "drag" on the dusting cloth or brush; others achieved the same results with the anti-static preparation. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the applied finish actually reduced the amount of dust collected.

Several of the blinds placed in the homes had a special silicon treatment applied at the factory. The women having these in at least one room were definitely aware of the reduced amount of dust as compared to that on other blinds. In one home a blind with this treatment hung

TABLE 2.—Frequency of Dusting and Major Cleaning of Venetian Blinds by the 12 Cooperating Homemakers

Homemaker	Location of home	Type Fuel*	Frequency of Dusting						Frequency of Major Cleaning				
							Needed more often					Needed more often	
			Weekly	Every 2 weeks	Once a month	Less often	Kitchen	Bath	Once a year	Twice a year	Three times a year	Kitchen	Bath
A	City	Gas–Rad.		×					×			×	×
B	Rural	Coal–FA		×			×	×	×			×	×
C	Rural	Coal–FA		×			×		×			×	
D	City	Gas–FA		×							×	×	×
E	Rural	Gas–FA		×						×			
F	Rural	Oil–FA		×							×		
G	City	Gas–Rad.				×				×			
H	Rural	Oil–FA			×				×				
I	Rural	Coal–FA			×						×		
J	Suburb.	Gas–FA		×			×		×				
K	Rural	Coal–Rad.		×			×			×		×	×
L	Rural	Oil–FA	×							×		×	

*Rad.—Radiator; FA—Forced Air.

in a family room for six months without being dusted or collecting noticeable dust. The homemaker dusted all other blinds frequently and regularly.

Major Cleaning Practices

It must be remembered that these participants had the blinds in use for only one year so their opinions and practices in major cleaning were somewhat limited.

Five of the women who dusted every two weeks thought that only the kitchen and bathroom blinds need special cleaning more than once a year. One woman with other dusting habits thought, too, that blinds should be cleaned once a year; all others thought they needed cleaning at least twice yearly.

Eight of the women would do the major cleaning with the blinds at the windows; one would remove them, wash them by hand in sink or bathtub and rinse with a hose; three women were yet undecided as to which method they would follow. Five of the women preferred the cleaning and polishing wax instead of water for major cleaning.

Preferences for Materials

Eight of the women preferred metal slats; 3, steel; 2, aluminum; and, 3 had no choice between the two metals. Four would prefer wood slats. Reasons given for preference for metal was high gloss, light weight, and ease in cleaning.

Those preferring wood thought it gave a "soft" appearance, weight helped to hold blind in place, and it was "quieter" than metal. Eleven of the 12 women would choose the plastic tape, either woven or smooth (extruded), because of ease in cleaning and it did not readily show dust and soil.

How Venetian Blind Cleaning Compared With Other Cleaning Tasks.

At the end of the 12-month period the women were asked to score the same cleaning tasks as asked of the women earlier surveyed. The results can be seen in the table on the following page. Oven cleaning was considered most difficult, floor cleaning rated second; washing windows, third; and blind cleaning and bathroom fixtures tied for the least difficult (Table 3).

It is probable that these women were more "Venetian blind conscious" than the majority might be since they were challenged and interested in their care and use. Perhaps this fact alone is indicative of the need for educational information to off-set adverse criticism of cleaning and "My neighbor says . . . ."

Opinions Concerning Replacements

Eleven of the 12 women would like more Venetian blinds and hope to purchase more for the other rooms in their houses; only one woman was undecided (Homemaker I). The reasons given for liking their blinds were identical to those given by the women in the survey.

TABLE 3.—Cooperators' Ratings of the Five Most Disliked Cleaning Tasks*

Homemakers	Cleaning Task									
	Oven		Floors		Venetian blinds		Bath rooms		Windows	
	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score
A	1	(5)	2	(4)	3	(3)	4	(2)	5	(1)
B	1	(5)	3	(3)	5	(1)	4	(2)	2	(4)
C	1	(5)	3	(3)	2	(4)	4	(2)	5	(1)
D	1	(5)	4	(2)	3	(3)	5	(1)	2	(4)
E	1	(5)	2	(4)	3	(3)	4	(2)	5	(1)
F	1	(5)	2	(4)	5	(1)	4	(2)	3	(3)
G	1	(5)	2	(4)	4	(2)	5	(1)	3	(3)
H	1	(5)	5	(1)	4	(2)	3	(3)	2	(4)
I	3	(3)	2	(4)	4	(2)	1	(5)	5	(1)
J	2	(4)	5	(1)	4	(2)	3	(3)	1	(5)
K	1	(5)	3	(3)	4	(2)	2	(4)	5	(1)
L	2	(4)	1	(5)	3	(3)	5	(1)	4	(2)
Weighted Score†		56		38		28		28		30

*In order from most (1) to least (5) disliked.

†First, 5 points; second, 4 points; third, 3 points; fourth, 2 points; and, fifth, 1 point.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLEANING AND DUSTING VENETIAN BLINDS

Dust blinds frequently, at least once or twice a month, and a major cleaning will seldom be necessary.

For dusting use a V-shaped tool with Dynel rolls or round brush vacuum cleaner attachments. If a vacuum cleaner is not available, use dusting gloves made of four thicknesses of cheese cloth. Such gloves will protect the hands from scratches or cuts by sharp edges of metal slats.

Use a polishing and cleaning wax or an anti-static product on the slats. The dust is more easily removed than from untreated slats.

Time and motions in cleaning, dusting and application of the wax or anti-static product can be reduced by using both hands in the process. Working from the center of the top slat with gloved hands, fingers on top and thumbs underneath the slats, move the hands in opposite directions—the right hand to the right and the left hand to the left—with even pressure which will hold the blind in place. When the end of the slat is reached, drop the hands to the ends of the slat below and move them back to the center. Then drop to the third slat, etc., until the bottom slat is dusted. If the blind is too wide to reach the full width, do one side working to the center; then, the other side. This way of cleaning avoids using one hand merely as a holding device to keep the blind from swaying and over-use of the other hand and arm. Postural balance is also more readily kept.

Leave the blinds at the windows for special cleaning. First, dust with vacuum tool or dusting gloves. Use clean gloves, pour some of the cleaning wax in the palm of each glove and rub hands together to spread the wax on thumbs and end of gloves. Then proceed as suggested for dusting—moving hands with thumbs under slat from center to end; then starting at the ends of the slat below and working back to the center. If gloves become soiled change hands and use back of gloves as they will fit either hand. Have two or three pairs and wash them in the regular washing. Plastic tapes may be cleaned with the polishing and cleaning wax. If cotton tapes are used instead of wax, the worker may find it easier to use detergent water, squeezing the gloves out to prevent dripping, and clean the tapes as she works. Use a mild liquid detergent; no rinsing should be necessary.

After washing blinds with water, apply the cleaning and polishing wax and polish slats after they are dry.

Commercial laundry service for Venetian blinds is available in cities. Prices for cleaning and repairs are moderate. The homemaker employed outside of the home or those with physical limitations, in particular, may want to investigate this service.

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